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A

Seasonable Proposal

TO THE

NATION,

Concerning

A Register

OF

ESTATES

In this KINGDOM.

Tendred to the Consideration of the *Publick-Spirited* in both Houses.

Difficile negotium propter studia partium, sed tanto Regi nihil dignum nisi quod difficile, & ab aliis omnibus desperatum. Grotius.

Printed in the Year 1669.

A

Seasonable Proposal

FOR THE

NATION,

A Regulator

OF

ESTATES

In this KINGDOM.

A Proposal concerning a Register of ESTATES.

IT may be suspected, there is, and will be some contriving heads still on work for Innovation in this Kingdom: and the certain way to undermine the *Commonwealthsman*, and secure *Regal-Government*, is to consider what are those Publick things which the People do hope for, or ever expected by a *Common-wealth*, and to have the King and his Parliament to be the Propolers and Authors themselves of all that *Good* to the Subject.

The Grand thing worthy the design of every *Publick-Spirit*, at this season, were a *Register of Estates*. Such a *Register*, driven up to the head, should bring all Possessions of Houses and Lands to one Tenure, that is *holding* all of that *Register*, Enfranchized from whatsoever is *Servil* besides. The doing of this, at one dash, would put an end to all Contentions and Suits about the Titles of mens Possessions to the Worlds End: which were a thing of more rare advantage out of doubt to the Community, than all whatsoever the whole Series of other Kings and Parliaments have done for the Land since *Edward* the *Confessor*. Again, into this *Register*, as all Possessions, so all the Moneys of the Nation should be brought, no Debt else being to be allowed by Law: By which means the *Commonwealth* shall be immediately made as rich again as it is, receiving its Emolument of all the Money, as well as the Estates, that every man hath.

Unto this *Registry* therefore let us suppose that so much *per annum* (conceive 6*d* or 12*d*) in the Pound (of both)

to be paid as *Quit-Rent*, for the Standing Revenues of the *Common-wealth*, distinct from the Kings own Revenues, which are to be left wholly to himself. Out of this Rent and Treasure, yearly growing, and still extant, should any Parliament that is called, give their Supply for emergent occasions. Here would be no trouble then about raising of Taxes any more, but Consultation only to be had what was fit to be done and spared from the Common Bank. For this Rent being the Publick Stock, that is the Nations Money, not the Kings, should be ordered to the setting the Poor at work, and accommodating the Trader, while the encrease and gain were the *Communities*, and disposable only by a Parliament, as the Purse of the Kingdom now is. Lo here our *Politicks*, how every Bee is contributary to the Hive, and what is not profitable to the Hive, must not be held good for the Bee.

Against this *Register of Estates* there will be combined a threefold Interest; Of the *Lawyer*, of the *Usurer*, and of the *Broken-Merchant*. The *Lawyer* will give twenty Reasons against it, but the bottom of them all will be this only, Then men are not like to go to Law as they now do. The *Usurer* will cry out, *By this means every bodies Estate shall be known, and what a world of hurt will ensue thereupon?* But the substance only must come to this, that when he hath five or ten thousand pounds perhaps at use, he should not now go Scot-free any longer as he hath done, never to pay a penny to the *Commonwealth*, or the King; when the poor man, who hath a Living but of 10 or 20 l. a year in all the world, must be Taxed at the full, and at so much the greater rate, for the bearing his burthen for him. The *Broken-Tradesman* likewise will exclaim, *This will hinder Trade; many now live on their Credit, but when the Register shall*

ſhall tell all, they ſhall not be truſted. The ſum of which indeed is, that then no one perſon, by his being a Knave, ſhall be longer in a capacity, to undo ſo many honeſt men when he breaks, as now they are uſed to do. By all which his Majeſty and the Parliament may here, at one view, be pleaſed to ſee how theſe Reaſons and Intereſts, which will be urged againſt this excellent thing, ſhall be found the very ground and reaſon it ſelf irretragable upon which it is to be raiſed and upholden.

Beſides, there is one advantage above all, which perhaps never came yet into many mens thoughts, and that is, That by this way there ſhall a new Stock be brought up in the Nation to trade upon, when the Moneys at preſent are drained low, to wit, the Stock of *Honeſty*: for when all mens conditions ſhall lye open, the truſt that a man hath for the future ſhall be on his Honeſty, and not on a deceitful Reputation of more than he is worth: which will not only make every one ſtrive to preſerve that (which is of enexpreſſable concern to the whole) but ſhall put it in the power of every man to have at firſt wherewithal to live upon, until by his own fault or falſhood he hath himſelf forfeited the ſame. And for this purpoſe are there ſome Rules to be further thought upon, as to a before-intimated Publick Encouragment to the induſtrious beginner, and hopeful man; who will never dare to run laviſh, while ſuch a bridle is held upon him, as the view of all that will.

There may be happily ſeveral things objected in reference to Propriety, and Particular concern, which ſhall not yet depreſs this motion, but advance and improve it. There is therefore an Eminent Dominion (let us know) in the Supream Authority (which in this Realm doth lye

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in the King and his Parliament, not *Severally*, but as *One Corporation joyntly*) of every *Common-wealth*, as the chief Writers of Politicks do tell us, over the Estates, Goods, and Commodities of all Persons; so that if there be any thing grievous to the generality, or inconvenient to the whole, it is no wrong unto Private Men, for the Parliament to remove it, though it cannot be done without their loss. For that Propriety which we call *Meum* and *Tuum*, is alwayes to be understood between one man and another, and not between any man and the *Common-wealth*, whose greater concern must over-rule all, according to that Fundamental Justice, upon which all Policy is built and maintained. As one of the chiefest things then which are desirable amongst what is wanting in this Kingdom, I have said is a *Register* mentioned: So, among some few Grievances there is on the Subject, one of the chief, fit to be redressed, is that piece of the *Norman Yoke*, which lyes upon those *Lands* they call *Coppy-holds of Inheritance*, that are *Heriotable*, and the *Fine* uncertain at the Will of the Lord.

The most radical advantage the Commons of *England* have above the People in other States, do consist in their Liberty (by the Constitution of the Land) to chuse their Representatives in Parliament. *All the Commons in the Realm are represented in Parliament, by the Knights and Burgesses*, (sayes Sir *Edward Cooke*) and are called, *Tout le Comminaltie de la terre illonq; sumones*, in the Preface of *Westminster* the first. And what an unreasonable thing is it that a man of a hundred pound a year, of his own Inheritance, whose Land is *Coppy*, shall have no Vote in chooseing a Knight of the Shire into the House, when he that hath but 40*s*. a year in all the world (*free*) hath and ought

ought to have, according to the usage of the Land? neither is it indeed tolerable, that there should be such Oaths taken, as there are customarily, to the Lords of Mannors, which no Conscientious or Ingenuous spirit can choose but regret unto any, but their Soveraign Lord the King only. There is no reason a man of Estate should dye, and his Lands be free from Debts, only for the *servile* tenure of them. Neither is it fit a man of greater abilities and means should be exempt from service at the Assizes or other Courts, and the poorer and less able be made to serve, onely because the ones Land is *Free*, and the other *Coppyhold*.

If it was reasonable in the Lords of such Mannors, who had Lands in *Capite*, to desire of the King a relief in the case of *Wardships*, would it not be just in the King to expect and resolve *they* should do to *others*, as they thought fit *He* should do to *them*? Suppose then a Statute *Vicessimo secundo Caroli secundi*; Be it Enacted that all Lands and Estates which are Inheritance, and yet *Coppy*, be for ever hereby Enfranchized, all Heriots henceforth Abolished, and that every Tenant be made a Debtor in lieu hereof to the Lords of such Mannors in the value of two years purchase the full rent, or forty years purchase the Quit-rent, (at the choice of the Tenant) to be paid in two years, and to be recovered by the same Statute. Who can say that any so grateful Act of this nature hath pass'd since *William* the Conqueror? And who can judge it not fit, that when the *Jews* had their *Jubilees* once in *fifty* years, the *English* People and *Community* should have one in *six hundred* and upward, since his Conqueft?

Believe it, those things which are a Leaven in the hearts of men to wish for a Change, (as there was nothing in

in the Associate Counties more prevalent, when time served, than this) do require the Statesman's Prevention and kindly Reformation. The sum whereof, in this *Register of Estates* might be comprized, but that it is a brief Essay, and the first draught, and not the full Pourtracture that is intended in this one sheet of Paper.

Four things would make this Nation more happy than it is: *A more generous Education of our Children.* (See the Little Book come out newly, Entituled, *The Childrens Petition and Remonstrance to the present Parliament.*) *A Register of Estates. A Commutation of Tythes. A Union of the Kings Protestant Subjects in the business of Religion.*

FINIS.